

# THE BOSTON INFORMER

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Winter 2012

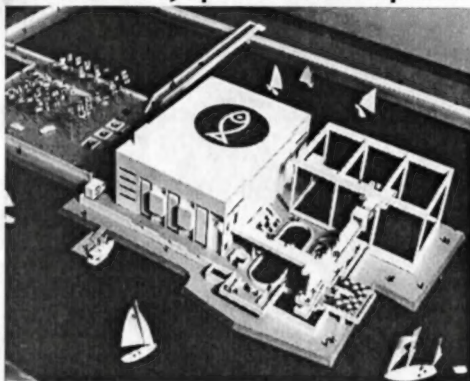
## Five Decades Ago...

Urban and regional planning had a resurgence in the 1960s in Boston and the nation. The City's population was 697,197, down 100,000 since 1950, and Boston was the 13th biggest City in the U.S. The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) brought in Ed Logue from New Haven in 1960 to run it. Logue was charged with establishing a planning and urban design vision. Young designers were encouraged to develop new ideas and approaches to urban living and working. Mayors Collins and White encouraged large-scale planning, development and urban renewal throughout the city. The elevated Central Artery had just been completed and already new approaches were being considered to replace the structure. Operation STOP and community groups began influencing urban development and transportation choices. Bottom line: five decades ago Boston launched a period of growth and renewal which it is still in, four mayors and 40 years later.

### Planning and Development

#### 1964: UMass Boston established; opens in Park Square.

After a search led by Sasaki, Dawson & Demay for the new 15,000-student facility, the proposed location at the railyards at Copley Square (now Copley Place Mall) was loudly opposed by local groups. BRA director Ed Logue assigned a 20-per-



1969: N.E. Aquarium opens on Central Wharf.

son urban design task force to develop a plan for the new campus which he determined was to be located at Columbia Point. A relief to many Back Bay residents, the campus moved to Dorchester in 1974.

#### 1969: Construction of Harbor Towers begins.

Harry Cobb of I. M. Pei and Partners designed a three-tower complex at India Wharf; two towers were built along with the seven-story parking garage. Poor economic conditions stopped the third tower from being built. Waterfront urban designers were split on how the wharves should be developed: point towers like Harbor Towers or long, low historic-looking buildings like Lewis Wharf and later Rows Wharf? Chapter 90 regulations have now weighed in on this and the lower buildings along the water are under the legal conditions.



1969: Proposed three-tower Harbor Towers.

**1965: Prudential Center dedicated before crowd of 35,000.** The Prudential Center, designed by Charles Luckman & Assoc., (Luckman was a soap company executive who became an architect in his 40s) was built under a Ch. 121A incentive program exempting Prudential Insurance Co. from taxes for 40 years. The

52-story tower (the tallest in the world outside Manhattan at the time), residential towers and shopping area transformed massive railyards and opened the door for the new Boston. Tower construction was delayed as details on how the Turnpike Extension walls would interface with Pru foundations were resolved. The Mandarin Oriental & Prudential shopping arcade filled in many of the outdoor spaces and setbacks required under the Ch. 121A zoning approvals.

**1962: Old Scollay Square demolished to build Government Center.** The new \$20 million City Hall (Kallman, McKinnell, Knowles) was the centerpiece for the 52-acre Government Center redevelopment plan (Howard Greeley etc. & I. M. Pei). The overall plan included the One-Three Center Plaza complex forming the edge on Cambridge Street, the 2,310-car Government Center Garage and MBTA station, two federal office buildings and a "motel" between the Blackstone Block and Congress Street

continued on page 2

### Predictions for 2012

- The MBTA considers thousands of comments on its budget woes and decides:
  - Eliminate ferries, but for \$1 commuters will be allowed on the former ferry docks to try to hitch a ride to Boston on passing tugs and LNG Tankers.
  - Weekend commuter rail will be eliminated but passengers will be able to rent rail wheels for their cars to ride the rails to Boston.
  - Food and drink vendors will be allowed on trains, subways and buses with a percentage of profits going to the MBTA.
- Mayor Menino will reward Millennium Partners for taking over the Filene's hole-in-the-ground site by allowing the building to exceed Dubai's world's tallest building at 2,700 feet. The Mayor said, "This will prove that Boston is a world class city."
- Since plans for commuter rail to Fall River and New Bedford are no longer financially feasible, the MBTA will start commuter boat service, saving millions.
- Prudential Insurance Co., owners of the Harbor Garage (next to the New England Aquarium), under pressure from the Mayor, will team with his favorite developers, Millennium Partners and Joe Fallon, to redevelop the garage as an Innovation Center for new concepts for the insurance industry. Parking will be moved underground, but while construction is in progress, the developers will rent a mothballed aircraft carrier for parking.



## 5 decades, continued

similar in form to the Center Plaza buildings to enclose the lower end of the City Hall Plaza. This element was dropped when preserving the view from Tremont Street to Old North Church made the project uneconomical. The Holocaust Memorial & Central Artery/Tunnel vent and building now occupy a part of this space. A pedestrian bridge across Congress Street to Dock Square was proposed to support the Quincy Market revival but it too was dropped.

### 1965: Hotel Sheraton opens at Prudential Center

The first new hotel in Boston in 30 years, the 1,012-room Hotel Sheraton at the Prudential Center is still the largest in number of rooms. A magnet of activity in southern end of the Back Bay, the hotel on Dalton Street was followed by the dramatic new Christian Science Center (I. M. Pei & Partners and Araldo Cossutta, Associated Architects).



## Transportation

### 1961: Boston Common Garage.

Charles Street side of Boston Common is ripped up for construction of a 1,300-car underground garage.

### 1963: MBTA is born.

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) created by the state legislature, replacing the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

### 1965: MBTA introduced the T logo and color-coded transit lines.

The MBTA commissioned Cambridge Seven Architects to develop new standards for MBTA stations including graphics, artwork and access. The BRA developed the yellow, black and gray color scheme for buses. The City of Boston got in the swing, developing a logo and color scheme for police vehicles. The image of City Hall was added to the Police Dept. arm patch.

### 1966: Destruction for highways begins.

Demolition of houses and businesses begins for Southwest Expressway (I-95) in Boston. Over 500 buildings are torn down before construction stops for good.



### 1968: Wood Island Park in East Boston taken for Logan Airport expansion

The Olmsted-designed Wood Island Park, a 46-acre recreation area at Neptune Road, was razed for airport expansion, Runway 15/33.

### 1970: Gov. Francis Sargent says, "We were wrong" about highways.

Republican Governor Sargent issues moratorium on highway construction in Boston area and initiates ground-breaking Boston Transportation Planning Review to study transportation issues.

### 1969: Service temporarily suspended on MBTA 'A line' trolley to Brighton.

Trolley service is never restored. Route 57 bus is its replacement.



## Cultural

### 1963: Anthony's Pier 4 Restaurant opens.

### 1963: City lobbies to host 1975 World's Fair.

Boston submitted a plan for the 1975 World's Fair to be at Columbia Point. The proposed UMass Boston site in Copley Square created such a political firestorm that the BRA designed the Columbia Point campus to be a World's Fair site with the end product a university campus (a la Barcelona). Shoddy construction at UMass led to the Ward Commission to investigate and change public bidding procedures.



### 1967: Red Sox Impossible Dream Team

Red Sox left fielder Carl Yastrzemski bats

.417 with 9 home runs in September to lead Red Sox from last place in 1966 to American League pennant and World Series (Sox lost to St. Louis). Yaz wins the Triple Crown, the last player to win it.



## Government and Politics

### 1968: Kevin White becomes Mayor at age 38.

### 1968: 'Maverick Street Mothers' force Massport to deal with truck traffic

A group of East Boston women sit-in on Maverick Street protest against 600 trucks a day using Maverick Street for construction on Runway 15/33. After a week Massport stops trucks and agrees to build a special truck route.

### 1969: Boston passes rent control law.

The law regulates rents in buildings with six or more units until 1973 when it was expanded to cover buildings with four or more. Statewide referendum ends rent control in 1995.

### 1969: New Boston City Hall opens

City Hall and the brick plaza (1.8 million bricks) are the cornerstone of government taking charge of revitalizing downtown Boston.

**1970: Boston's population is 641,071.** Boston is the 16th biggest city in the U.S., down 56,000 since 1960. About 82 percent of Boston residents are white.





**Building Boom in 2012** – The Great Recession “officially” lasted from December 2007 through June 2009, bringing development in Boston to a halt. The next few recovery years got projects financed, designed, permitted and embraced. So 2012 brings a bumper crop of office, retail and residential development.

#### Under Construction:

1. **Fan Pier (Seaport District):** Two office and labs buildings, 1.1 million s.f. for Vertex Pharmaceutical.
2. **157 Berkeley St., Liberty Mutual (Back Bay):** 22 stories, 590,000 s.f. of office building with pedestrian bridge over Stuart Street.
3. **The Kensington (659 Washington St., Chinatown):** 27 stories, 385 apartments.
4. **Hayward Place (580 Washington St., Downtown Crossing):** 15 stories, 256 residential units and 9,700 s.f. of retail.
5. **Avalon at Exeter (77 Exeter St., Back Bay):** 28 stories, 187 apartments, 1,300 s.f. of retail.
6. **The Victor (195 Haverhill St., West End):** 11 stories, 286 apartments plus 17,000 s.f. of retail.
7. **Dudley Municipal Office Building (Washington and Warren St., Dudley Square):** 23,000 s.f. plus ground-floor retail, office building for Boston School Dept.

#### Scheduled to Start Construction in 2012:

1. **Waterside Place (Congress and Summer streets, Seaport District):** First phase, 19 stories, 234 apartments plus office and retail.
2. **45 Stuart St. (Theater District):** 29 stories, 404 residences.
3. **Pier 4 (Northern Avenue, Seaport District):** First phase, 21 stories, 357 apartments.
4. **“Ink Block” (Boston Herald site, 300 Harrison Ave., South End):** Four buildings, 5–9 stories, 471 apartments, 85,000 s.f. retail.
5. **The Merano (Causeway Street, Bulfinch Triangle):** 230 residential units, 210-room hotel, 471 apartments, 18,000 s.f. of retail and restaurant space.
6. **120 Kingston St., aka Dainty Dot (Chinatown):** 240 apartments, 5,000 s.f. restaurant.

#### In Various Stages of Planning and Design:

1. **Filene’s site (aka One Franklin; Downtown Crossing):** New developer proposing a 600-foot-high retail, residential and commercial tower.
2. **Hodge Boiler Works (East Boston waterfront):** 95 apartments, 30–40-slip marina, cafe.
3. **Copley Place residences (Back Bay):** 47 stories, 318 condominiums, 115,000 s.f. of retail and restaurant space.
4. **Fenway Center (Turnpike air rights at Kenmore Square):** First phase, 400 apartments, 60,000 s.f. retail.
5. **Parcel 9 (Surface Artery and Blackstone Street, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway):** 70-foot-high food market building and low-level market hall.
6. **Seaport Square (Seaport Boulevard, Seaport District):** First phase, two 22-story residential buildings, 750 apartments, 340,000 s.f. of retail.
7. **319 A St. (Seaport District):** Old warehouse will be converted to a 20-story, 202-unit apartment building.
8. **411 D St. (Seaport District):** Two buildings, 5 stories and 6 stories, 197 residences plus retail.
9. **Government Center Garage (50 Sudbury St., Government Center):** Proposal to demolish garage and build 700-foot and 350-foot towers plus 3.5 million s.f. of office and residential.

## What’s Up?

◆ **City Hall Plaza Study**—The Boston Informer reported in a recent issue the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) hired Utile late last year to do (another) six-month, \$100,000 study (this one will at least build on the 2010 EPA study). The goal is to “frame and inform proposed projects on and bordering City Hall Plaza.”

However, the project has been seriously delayed while plans for rebuilding MBTA Government Center station are finalized and plans to improve accessible routes from the Sears Crescent to the Plaza are developed. The Utile study is just starting on the rest of the Plaza and is months away from public release. Three public meetings are included in the project scope. For information, contact the BRA at 617-722-4300.

◆ **Boston Bikes Annual Update**—The City’s bicycle program has given an “update” on its activities for the last four years. The event is mostly a back-patting event that summarizes accomplishments over the last year, highlighting the fan mail, claims about revenue gained by small businesses from Hubway stations that took out parking spaces, and other specious “statistics.” The meeting barely mentioned upcoming 2012 activities. The City did reveal that the 10-year Bike Network Plan would be “unveiled” in July for review and will contain “cutting-edge features” and calls for a total of 420 total miles of bikeways of all kinds.

The most interesting revelation, however, was the Transportation Department’s statement that the City will generally not enforce the prohibition on parking in bike lanes and will use a “balanced” approach to enforcing motorist and cyclist behavior. Officials at the meeting implied that the City has no intention of “cracking down” to ensure bike lanes are not blocked and to stop erratic cyclist behavior that endangers pedestrians.

## PEOPLE MOVERS

**Bill Goode**, Commissioner of Inspectional Services Department (ISD), retired.

**Bryan Glascock**, director of the Boston Environment Dept., is also acting commissioner of ISD.

**Mossik Hacobian**, former head of Urban Edge Housing Corp., is interim executive director of Higher Ground, a Roxbury non-profit providing concentrated resources to selected areas.

**Karl Quackenbush** is the new executive director of the Central Transportation Planning Staff. He was acting director.

**Eddie Jenkins** is the new chief diversity and civil rights officer for MassDOT.

**Aaron Gornstein**, from executive director of Citizens Housing and Planning Assn. to Mass. undersecretary of the Dept. Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

**James Arthur Jemison**, on leave from GLC Development Resources, Inc., to deputy undersecretary for housing and deputy director of DHCD.

**Deerin Babb-Brott**, from Epsilon Associates to program director for the Collaborative Institute for Oceans, Climate and Security at UMass Boston.

**Ned Collier**, from Perry Dean Rogers to ICON architecture inc.

**Bob Culver**, from MassDevelopment to Sasaki Associates.



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## Welcome to The Boston Informer

The goal is simple: Provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The Boston Informer is published electronically by ATC Information, Inc., five times yearly in Boston, Mass. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

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*1962: Winner of the architectural competition for the new Boston City Hall announced*



**"That Won't Win Any Architectural Awards."**

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## You Were Asking

- Q. I read your story on the North Bank Bridge over the Millers River. Where is the proposed skate park in relation to the bridge?
- A. The Charles River Conservancy's planned skate park will be under the Zakim Bridge at the Charlestown end of the new pedestrian bridge. The skate park is expected to be open at the end of 2013.
- Q. What is happening at Copley Square Park—the trees seem to be dead?
- A. The reconstituted Friends of Copley Square did extensive research at the park and found almost half of the Sycamore/London Plane trees planted in the past 20 years have been hit with a blight. The City of Boston Parks & Recreation Dept. will meet with interested parties before replacing the diseased trees in coming months with a different species. Note: six trees on St. James Avenue have been removed and the tree pits filled as a result of the MBTA bus stop with little reaction.
- Q. I noticed there is green netting around the old Louis building on Newbury & Berkeley and at the old Ritz parking garage. What is happening?
- A. The former Louis building (built in 1863 for the Museum of Natural History) is being restored on the exterior and is slated to become the new space for Restoration Hardware, previously located at Boylston and Exeter streets. The former Ritz parking garage at 6 Newbury St. is being demolished and a new upscale office/commercial building will take its place.
- Q. All I hear about the \$280 million Longfellow Bridge project is bike lanes and sidewalks. Tell me there's more to the project for that money!
- A. Yes. The project will address structural deficiencies, upgrade the structural capacity and bring the bridge up to code. Improvements to parkland in Cambridge and Boston and a new pedestrian bridge over Storrow Drive are part of the project.



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